MONTHLY NOTES

FARM MANAGEMENT AND FARM ECONOMICS

May 1, 1922.

DURING THE MONTH past, the North and East have more or less marked time, waiting for the weather to warm up and the land to dry off.

The South has put in unusually large acreages of potatoes, melons, and truck crops in general. There is more than a little tendency in some old cotton sections to yield the flag temporarily to the boll weevil and plant potatoes or other cash crops in place of cotton.

A million and a quarter more breeding sows in the country than a year ago, according to the April 1 estimate. This is an 11% increase in one year. Somebody may have to develop an appetite for pork next fall.

The cold storage report of April 1 showed that we were rather low on butter and cheese; fairly high on eggs; low on pork, and decidedly low on beef. Total meat was 717 million pounds against 1,107 million last year and 1,221 million for five year average.

The wheat situation is a sensitively balanced one. Some well-informed men seem to think, however, that a crop scare is unlikely, and that the world will go through to the new crop with a little wheat to spare. It is only about a month to new wheat in this country.

PRICE INDEXES FOR MONTH ENDING APRIL 1 are given below. Farm products from Department of Agriculture; commodity groups from Bureau of Labor Statistics. The figures are all relative to the year 1913, which is taken as the base or 100:

Farm Products (Prices at the Farm)

	Feb.	Mar.
Cotton	127	129
Corn	92	96
Wheat	149	149
Hay	107	112
Potatoes	183	177
Beef cattle	86	93
Hogs	110	121
Eggs	132	103
Butter	128	128
Wool	132	150

Commodity Groups (Wholesale prices)

	Feb.	Mar.
Farm products	126	128
Food, etc.	138	138
Cloths & clothing	183	182
Fuel & lighting	183	183
Metals & met. products	115	114
Bldg. materials	202	202
Chemicals, etc.	159	159
House-furnishing goods	213	213
All commodities	151	152

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RELATIVE PURCHASING POWER

(At March 1922 Farm Prices)

1913 = 100

In terms of:	Of a Unit of: Cotton	Corn	Wheat	Hay	Potatoes
All commodities	85	63	98	74	116
Cloths, etc.	71	53	82	62	97
Fuel, etc.	70	52	81	61	97
Metals, etc.	124	84	131	98	155
Bldg. material	64	47	74	55	88
House-furnishing goods	61	45	70	53	83

	Beef cattle	Swine	Eggs	Butter	Wool
All commodities	61	80	68	84	99
Cloths, etc.	51	67	57	70	82
Fuel, etc.	51	66	56	70	82
Metals, etc.	82	106	90	112	132
Bldg. material	46	60	51	63	74
House-furnishing goods	44	57	48	60	70

THE TREND OF PURCHASING POWER during March continued upward in the West, broadly speaking. Hogs made some strides toward their pre-war purchasing power. Wool jumped twelve points and is now back where we anticipate that the sheep men will presently find life worth living again.

There is a good deal of fiction about farmers' purchasing power as indicated by present prices. Wheat prices are fairly strong, but farmers have no wheat to sell. The same is true of cotton.. Things like corn or potatoes, of which there are still some on farms have not achieved any very overwhelming heights of buying power. Theoretically a man can market corn to advantage now in the form of pork. But the first essential in hog feeding is to have the hog. Corn belt farmers are holding back breeding stock from market and doing their best to produce a crop of pigs, wherewith to work the magic conversion. Next fall will be time enough to talk about the margin of profit between corn on the ear and corn on the hoof.

Farm products as a whole had a purchasing power of 67, against 62 in February, 56 in January. These are the index figures compiled by the Dept. of Agriculture, and are probably the most accurate index available showing the general purchasing power of farm products.

SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT OF FARM PRODUCTS

Figures show corn, hogs, cattle receipts at primary markets; butter receipts at 5 markets; wheat (including flour) and cotton exports. All figures given to nearest thousand:

1922	CORN Receipts Th. Bu.	HOGS Receipts Thousands	CATTLE Receipts Thousands	BUTTER Receipts Th. lbs.	WHEAT Exports Th. Bu.	COTTON Exports Th. Bales
January	52,097	4,278	1,628	41,697	14,985	475
February	58,330	3,612	1,416	38,894	10,991	338
MARCH	31,035	3,411	1,622	44,912	14,371	461

THE TREND OF FARM PRODUCT MOVEMENT DURING MARCH as shown by the figures above, appeared to indicate:

Seasonal slowing down of corn.

Lighter hog receipts, which is also a seasonal occurrence. Probably partly due to holding back of breeding stock.

Same number cattle being marketed.

Seasonal increase in butter production.

Fairly heavy wheat exports.

Big jump in cotton exports over February.

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THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMISSION of Agricultural Inquiry impresses us more, the more we use it. Part One on The Agricultural Crisis and Part Two on Credit have been issued for some time. Part three on Transportation will be issued about May 15.

In this Report, are all the facts and figures that picture the onward march of agriculture. Mr. Anderson's Commission has done for the field of agricultural economics what Mr. Aldrich did in an earlier day in the field of price statistics. In other words, it has assembled the basic data.

No economics man can afford to be without Part One, at least, of this "House Report No. 408."

THE RADIO is here with a bang'. It takes no exceptional intellect to grasp what this may mean to our farms as time goes on. It will not be long before every agricultural college will be equipped with broadcasting outfit. The receiving instrument can be made by any bright boy for a few dollars. A good receiver can already be bought complete for $50 and upward. The air zones will be organized and news and other information will go out according to orderly schedule. Presently the radio will be as commonplace in the farmer's living room as the telephone is now.

The agricultural worker can hardly regard himself any longer as a live man who is not "up" on the latest radio developments. Whatever helps disseminate facts to people at large is a boost to better living.

You can get radio information from this Bureau.

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA we receive a mimeographed monthly summary headed "Notes on South Dakota Farm Production Costs, Prices, and Economic Problems." This is the work of Professor M. R. Benedict, It is full of information that might help a man to keep his farm production in line with economic conditions. There are other States where farm leaders would be glad to have a summary of this kind sent out every month from the State College.

WHOLE MILK PRODUCTION INCREASED LAST YEAR though values went down. (Estimates of Department of Agriculture):

	Whole Milk Sales & Farm Consumption (Millions of gallons)	Av. Price per gallon	Total Value
1919	6,113	29.24	$1,787
1920	6,101	30.10	1,836
1921	7,118	32.19	1,579

RESULTS WILL SHORTLY BE PUBLISHED from the following important projects in this Office:

Cost of Potato Production in seven leading producing areas. Will show trend of production, costs, profits from 1913 to present.

Cost of Producing Apples in the Shenendoah Valley, Va., a study covering 5 years. Preliminary report ready soon.

General Farm Business Survey in Citrus Fruit area in Florida, covering 5 years. Preliminary report nearly ready.

Similar survey in truck crop area in Florida. Also a 5 year study. Preliminary report soon.

Study of Land Values in Kentucky. This is a significant picture of the rise, flourishing, collapse, and aftermath of a land boom. Shows the trend of land values and tenure through the war period. Kentucky bulletin ready probably in near future.

TREND OF FARM EQUIPMENT PRICES is indicated in the following figures. These are the country-wide average of prices actually paid by farmers in February, as reported to the Bureau of Crop Estimates; figure given to nearest dollar:

	1914	1918	1921	1922
Plow	$ 12	$ 20	$ 24	$ 19
Double wagon	73	120	162	132
Manure spreader	107	169	174	160
Mower	46	79	93	79
Hay rake	--	--	55	45
Harrow	--	--	29	22
Cream separator	59	87	104	86
Single harness	15	24	34	26

TREND OF FERTILIZER PRICES (same source as above):

	1914	1918	1921	1922
Mixed fertilizer, per ton	$ 23.	$ 39.	$ 41.	$ 33.
Acid phosphate, " "	--	--	24.	19.
Lime, per barrel	1.36	2.30	3.39	2.82

THE TREND OF FREIGHT RATES has played no little part in agricultural production the past five years. We have inquiries from time to time as to what the actual changes in rates have been. It is expected that the forthcoming part of the Report of the Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry will deal exhaustively with the relations of transportation to agriculture.

Following herewith are some rates on a few representative farm products between certain points which show the trend from 1913 to date. These have been supplied by the Interstate Commerce Commission:

WHEAT

Kansas City to New York, N. Y.	Rates in cents per 100 lbs. DOMESTIC LOCAL	DOMESTIC PROPORTIONAL	EXPORT LOCAL	EXPORT PORPORTIONAL
Jan. 1, 1913	30.75	28	27.75	25
Jan. 20, 1915	31.55	28.8	28.45	25.7
March 31, 1918	34.25	31.5	32.75	30
June 25, 1918	43	39.5	41.5	38
Dec. 1, 1919	44.5	39.5	43	38
Aug. 26, 1920	61.5	55	60	53.5
Dec. 6, 1920	62	55	60.5	53.5
May 15, 1921	62	55	59.5	52.5
July 1, 1921	62	55	56.5	49.5
Sept. 3, 1921	62	55	49	42
Sept. 28, 1921	57.5	50.5	49	42
Jan. 2, 1922 to date.	54	54	40	40

WHEAT

Chicago, Ill. to New York, N. Y.	Rates in cents per 100 lbs. DOMESTIC LOCAL	DOMESTIC RESHIPPING	EXPORT LOCAL	EXPORT RESHIPPING
Jan. 1, 1913	20.5	16	17.5	13
Jan. 8, 1914	21	16	18	13
Jan. 20, 1915	21.8	16.8	18.7	13.7
March 25, 1918	24.5	19.5	23	18
June 25, 1918	30.5	24.5	29	23
Dec. 31, 1919	31	24.5	29.5	23
Aug. 26, 1920	43.5	34.5	42	33
July 1, 1921	43.5	34.5	39	30
Sept. 3, 1921	43.5	34.5	31.5	22.5
Sept. 28, 1921	39	30	31.5	22.5
Jan. 1, 1922 to date.	38	30	30.5	22.5

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Freight Rates (Continued)

Denver to Chicago	CATTLE, C/L, min. wt. 20500 to 26000 lbs. Rates in cents per 100 lbs. DOMESTIC LOCAL	DOMESTIC PROPORTIONAL	EXPORT LOCAL	EXPORT PROPORTIONAL
Jan. 1, 1913	47	47	47	47
June 25, 1918	54	54	54	54
Aug. 26, 1920	73	73	73	73
Jan. 1, 1922 to date.	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5

LIVE HOGS

Omaha to Chicago	Rates in cents per 100 lbs. DOMESTIC				EXPORT			
	LOCAL		PROPORTIONAL		LOCAL		PROPORTIONAL	
In Effect.	S.D.	D.D.	S.D.	D.D.	S.D.	D.D.	S.D.	D.D.
Jan. 1, 1913	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5
June 25,1918	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5
Aug. 26,1920	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Dec. 7, 1920	47	40	47	40	47	40	47	40
Jan. 2, 1922 to date.	42.5	36	42.5	36	42.5	36	42.5	36

S.D., C.L. min. wt. 16,000 to 21,000 lbs.
D.D., " " " 20,500 " 26,000 "

WOOL, in grease, C.L. Min.Wt. Sacks 24,000 Bales 32,000#.

Cheyenne, Wyo. to Boston, Mass.	Rates in cents per 100 lbs. LOCAL		PROPORTIONAL		LOCAL		PROPORTIONAL	
	Sacks	Bales	Sacks	Bales	Sacks	Bales	Sacks	Bales
Jan. 1, 1913	132	115	132	115	132	115	132	115
Jan. 15, 1915	134.4	117.2	134.4	117.2	134.4	117.2	134.4	117.2
April 18, 1918	142	124	142	124	142	124	142	124
June 25, 1918	177.5	155	177.5	155	177.5	155	177.5	155
Aug. 26, 1920	241.5	211	241.5	211	241.5	211	241.5	211
June 26, 1921	236.5	206.5	236.5	206.5	236.5	206.5	236.5	206.5
July 1, 1921	235	205	235	205	235	205	235	205
Jan. 1, 1922 to date.	212	185	212	185	212	185	212	185

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Freight Rates (Continued)

HAY

Buffalo, N. Y. to Boston, Mass.	Rates in cents per 100 lbs. Domestic FIFTH CLASS	Export FIFTH CLASS
January 1, 1913	18.5	16
February 23, 1915	19.4	16.9
August 1, 1917	22	19.5
June 25, 1918	27.5	24.5
December 31, 1919	27.5	----
August 26, 1920	38.5	35
January 1, 1922	34.5	31.5
Present 4/13/22	34.5	32.5

COTTON

Memphis, Tenn. to New York, N. Y. Effective date.	DOMESTIC LOCAL	DOMESTIC PROPORTIONAL	EXPORT LOCAL	EXPORT PROPORTIONAL
Jan. 1, 1913	52½ c 42½ a 42½	 38 a 38	b 52½ bc 42½ ab 42½	 b 38 ab 38
Dec. 5, 1914	52½ c 42½	38 a 38	b 52½ bc 42½	b 38 ab 38
Oct. 15, 1915	54.1 c 44.1	38 a 38	b 54.1 bc 44.1	b 38 ab 38
Feb. 5, 1917		b 39½		b 39½
June 25, 1918	69.1 c 59.1	54½ a 53	b 69.1 bc 59.1	b 54½ ab 53
Sept. 25, 1919	d 79	d 59	d 79	d 59
Aug. 26, 1920	d 105½	d 78½	d 105½	d 78½
Jan. 10, 1921 to date.	d 105½	d 78½	d 105½	d 78½

(Uncompressed with privilege to carrier of compressing unless otherwise noted)

(a) Applies only on cotton in cylindrical bales.
(b) Rate includes delivery to shipside.
(c) Rate applies on compressed cotton, compressed at shipper's risk and expense.
(d) Rate applies on cotton in bales, compressed, or uncompressed with privilege to carrier of compressing.

THE TREND OF COUNTRY POPULATION during twenty years is shown in the following table. "Country" population is a tabulation made from each census by this Office, and represents all persons living outside incorporated places. (The census figure for "Rural" population differs in that it includes persons outside incorporated places of 2500 or more.)

In a word, this table shows increases in the South and Far West, and decreases generally through the East and Central West.

COUNTRY POPULATION

(All Population Outside of Incorporated Places)

DIVISION OR STATE	1920	1910	1900
UNITED STATES	42,519,685	41,635,329	39,308,474
NEW ENGLAND	1,448,758	1,475,476	1,459,706
Maine	450,337	461,456	441,342
New Hampshire	159,052	174,133	185,319
Vermont	188,324	212,104	231,667
Massachusetts	202,106	241,049	238,248
Rhode Island	15,217	17,956	20,909
Connecticut	433,722	368,778	342,221
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	4,509,210	4,507,961	4,387,133
New York	1,454,195	1,575,826	1,625,057
New Jersey	522,243	479,652	447,955
Pennsylvania	2,532,772	2,452,483	2,314,121
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	6,479,349	6,682,155	7,036,220
Ohio	1,612,259	1,649,948	1,741,446
Indiana	1,165,279	1,257,584	1,389,779
Illinois	1,443,045	1,486,160	1,598,385
Michigan	1,139,556	1,197,174	1,207,120
Wisconsin	1,119,210	1,091,289	1,099,490
WEST NORTH CENTRAL	5,740,496	5,902,960	5,909,290
Minnesota	966,354	899,248	890,490
Iowa	1,052,670	1,106,002	1,258,675
Missouri	1,424,108	1,535,719	1,669,233
North Dakota	432,480	415,800	247,998
South Dakota	389,601	389,536	294,893
Nebraska	612,093	638,070	624,643
Kansas	863,190	918,585	923,358

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COUNTRY POPULATION (Continued)

(All Population Outside of Incorporated Places)

DIVISION OR STATE	1920	1910	1900
SOUTH ATLANTIC	8,463,554	8,038,306	7,479,652
Delaware	70,138	76,210	74,686
Maryland	511,122	568,271	540,171
Virginia	1,508,244	1,472,109	1,429,414
West Virginia	962,797	860,479	753,099
North Carolina	1,823,666	1,669,331	1,558,721
South Carolina	1,234,687	1,161,208	1,079,278
Georgia	1,868,492	1,784,668	1,676,269
Florida	484,408	446,030	368,014
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL	6,204,355	6,177,980	5,962,179
Kentucky	1,583,070	1,545,591	1,511,947
Tennessee	1,593,310	1,609,804	1,619,893
Alabama	1,651,691	1,603,151	1,506,573
Mississippi	1,376,284	1,419,434	1,323,766
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	6,307,891	6,055,620	5,051,968
Arkansas	1,265,000	1,197,004	1,086,789
Louisiana	1,048,278	1,050,070	949,364
Oklahoma	1,202,759	1,106,413	648,072
Texas	2,791,854	2,702,133	2,367,743
MOUNTAIN	1,655,188	1,348,222	927,222
Montana	307,254	207,447	143,070
Idaho	234,469	196,815	126,351
Wyoming	91,263	79,359	53,149
Colorado	373,868	297,427	202,889
New Mexico	264,877	263,117	162,914
Arizona	208,714	124,688	94,587
Utah	132,990	119,773	111,529
Nevada	41,753	59,596	32,733
PACIFIC	1,710,884	1,446,649	1,095,104
Washington	494,483	415,928	248,604
Oregon	293,355	275,963	229,894
California	923,046	754,758	616,606

PROGRESS IN FARM MANAGEMENT EXTENSION WORK

H. M. Dixon
In Charge Farm Management Demonstrations

I have been interested during the past few months in reviewing the progress in farm management extension work. Looking back to the beginning of the work in 1913, and realizing that at that time there was only a very small amount of research results available in most States, we find that the first undertaking was that of the analysis of the business of a large number of farms in different areas of the States by the survey method. In all, there have been over 55,000 individual farm analyses made and the farm management extension forces are responsible for nearly 25,000 of these. This work had a far-reaching effect in better determining the place of the farm management work in a well-balanced extension program, in giving a more proper conception of what the financial side of farming is like and of better establishing in many areas the broad principles upon which successful farming is based.

But with all these results the early work was only one link in the chain. It was found through this early work that many farmers were interested in a better method of keeping their farm accounts and to meet this need the Farm Management Demonstrators prepared and made available to the farmers at a nominal cost a farm account book, simple and understandable in the make-up, yet complete enough to enable the farmer to summarize his account and locate the strong and weak points in his business. This phase of the work has now been in progress for a suffieient time to note marked results in many States. While prior to this there were from 10 to 15% of the farmers keeping some form of an account of their business, there was no uniformity in method and therefore little or no possibility of obtaining comparable results.

Since the Extension Departments of the State Agricultural Colleges have made it possible for farmers to obtain an account book, there are now many thousands using this book and are summarizing and interpreting their accounts in a comparable style instead of each farmer having a different type of account book or a different method of keeping his business transactions.

This improvement in accounting methods is bringing about a far better understanding of the uses and values of farm business data and is widening the interest and demand from farmers for results of research along economic lines.

The demand in farm management extension this past winter has been in assisting farmers in how to keep and summarize their farm business transactions and how to adjust their business in the light of the available economic facts. This is a large undertaking and in extending the work the methods must be such that the farmer can obtain and understand the factors and principles that will enable him to improve his business.

This brief review of the work indicates, I believe, that results are obtained through the accumulation process. The trend of this work is toward the adjustment of practical methods of extension that will enable an increasing number of farmers to better profit by results obtained through the more universal analysis of their individual farm accounts.

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SOME NOTES ON THE POTATO SITUATION

Uncle Sam grows the bulk of his potatoes in the half-dozen States that fringe the great St. Lawrence Basin The bulk of them are eaten in the same general neighborhood also - that being where the folks are thickest.

Uncle S. generally plans every year to raise about 4 bushels for each member of his family. He doesn't go in for potatoes as Europe does. Germany, for instance, used to figure on something like 25 bushels per head, and France about half that amount. They use potatoes in several industrial ways, and feed considerable to livestock. But on this side of the Atlantic we eat our potatoes. The fact that we only want about so many every year to eat cuts quite a good deal of figure in the whole situation. Demand not being quite so elastic as the weather, the price goes up and down from year to year like a mercury in March.

LAST YEAR'S CROP

For ten years back we have grown an average of 3,836,000 acres and a crop thereon of 366,027,000 bushels each year.

Last year we had 3,815,000 acres, and 346,823,000 bushels.

In other words, last year we had about an average total acreage, but the crop was rather light. What evidently did happen was that while the total crop of the country was not large, yet the half-dozen great surplus States had good crops and about as many potatoes to sell as usual.

MOVEMENT OF THE CROP

Farmers moved a good share of their saleable potatoes last fall. About 80% of the surplus crop left the farms before March 1, 1922. Some men naturally thought last fall a good season to store potatoes since all the crop reports indicated a rather short crop. Ordinarily, if the crop is 7% or more below normal, prices advance from fall to spring, (and if 7% or more above normal, prices usually are lower in spring.)

However, farmers had freshly in mind the tremendous surplus of 1920, and the 25¢ potatoes a year ago this spring. Moreover, everybody needed money, and this was the first ready money that had been visible for some time in many sections. It is not surprising that the average grower saw his potatoes go last November or December at from $1.00 to $1.50 and called it better than storing them. As it turned out, the men who sold early were the lucky ones.

The March 1 estimate of the Department showed 73,486,000 bushels held by farmers and 17,460,000 bushels by local dealers. It was estimated that the farmers had on that date about 31,000,000 bushels yet to sell (or 20% of their total surplus production.)

FREIGHT RATES

Something of the handicap outlying regions are under by reason of high freight rates is indicated in the following figures. Potatoes are a bulky crop. Other things being equal, they pay best grown reasonably close to the folks who eat them. High transportation costs accen-

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tuate this point.

Freight rates on potatoes between representative points are given herewith. These are the rates of last fall on which much of the crop moved. A comparison with the 1913 rates is also shown:

Rates in Cents per 100 lbs.

From	To	1913	1921
Bangor, Me.	New York City	26¢	52½¢
Grand Rapids, Mich.	"	29	58
St. Paul, Minn.	Chicago	17	29
Denver, Colo.	"	45	76½
New Orleans	"	40	78½

PRICES

Potatoes have not gone to the high prices this spring that were scheduled by some prophets. It is possible that the crop was somewhat underestimated. It is probable that most of us did not make allowance enough for the actual saleable crop in the surplus States - this being the portion that largely determines prices, just as the surplus wheat we export largely governs our domestic wheat prices. It may also be that the industrial cities have not eaten quite as many potatoes this past winter as some years.

Potatoes are now relatively higher in price than most of the crops that compete with them for land and labor. Relative prices on April 1 (compared with same date in pre-war years 1910-14) were as follows:

Potatoes	167
Beans	167
Cabbage	161
Wheat	132
Buckwheat	128
Hay	102
Corn	92

From which may be drawn one indication of why farmers are still planting potatoes this spring, in spite of the fact that potato prices are generally not as high as they were last fall.

THE OUTLOOK

The South has planted more potatoes this spring than last. This does not particularly affect the main crop, but is an indicator of how farmers feel about conditions.

Reports from New York State indicated recent intentions on the part of farmers to increase the acreage around 10% above last year.

Men who have been in Maine within the month say that while farmers in Aroostook County are not feeling very good about prices this spring, still a normal planting is probable.

Casual reports from the Lake States generally indicate that the acreage will tend to increase a trifle over last year, rather than otherwise.

Of course, it has so far been too early to get an accurate line on plans of farmers. A good many things can happen to affect planting a little one way or the other right up to the time the ground is fitted.

It is a safe bet, however, that Uncle Sam will go right along planning on upwards of 4 bushels apiece for his family. I will hazard the personal guess that he is planning, on the whole, to do a fairly careful job putting in the crop this spring, even though fertilizer prices are still rather high. It would seem that good farm management would dictate a policy of "normalcy." There is nothing about the situation as it stands to justify trying to speculate on either side of the fence. But after the potatoes are planted and the farmer has done what he intends in the matter - after all that part, the weather will step in and play a final hand. Acreage is one thing. The crop next fall will be another. After the usual number of potatoes are in the ground, then let us keep an eye on the crop statistics.

A. B. Genung
Office of Farm Management and Farm Economics
Washington, D. C.

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